

## PAGE OF READING FOR THE FAMILY

## Swedish Castles



Vadstena Castle on Lake Vattern.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

**S**WEDEN is still a land of castles, although the owners of many large estates have felt the effect of world depression and have been forced to curtail sharply their living expenses. Yet "modern housing" has made few inroads, except in the large cities; and the country gentlefolk, as a rule, adhere closely to quaint traditions of homeliness inherited from their ancestors.

It is not so easy to know the Swedes well, especially the dwellers in the country, who for the most part stay at home on their property. Foreigners are often led to think that they are stiff and reserved, sometimes a little sullen or even haughty. But this should be interpreted rather as a sign of their northern shyness.

They are in reality full of fun and of warm feeling; but when it is a question of showing the latter, their shrinking from impulsive gestures and emotional or grandiloquent language is both comic and touching.

Certainly the fetters are loosened somewhat when they are in a festive mood and have drunk a little wine. But it is not then that one gets closest to them. To know and value them fully, one must observe them within their own four walls, in their daily life and activities. Only in intimacy, free from alien, disturbing elements, does their charming individuality come to full flowering. Swedish home life is a cult and a culture unlike anything else, the product of centuries of tender polishing and refining. And nowhere has it attained such perfection as in the old country houses.

There still were families which can maintain to some degree their former luxurious standard of living. Some had the good fortune or the prudence not to invest their fortunes in the securities which had

later been affected by the crisis and the Krueger crash. Others had all their land leased on old and profitable contracts, so long as the tenants could keep up their payments.

**Big Landowners Suffer.**

If the situation is serious for nearly everyone nowadays, it is often catastrophic for the great landowners and territorial magnates. Not a month passes but some of them have to leave home and property.

For Swedish agriculture can no longer pay its way. There is the same conflict between agriculture and industry as in most other countries; and it looks as if the former were getting the worst of it.

A series of relief schemes has been started to try to aid agriculture in Sweden, as elsewhere. But there has been no visible result so far. An intensive educational campaign has been set on foot: state advisers and controllers have been provided for every branch of forestry and agriculture.

An active agitation is carried on for "buying Swedish" and for burning Swedish wood in the heating apparatus of public institutions to reduce the importation of coal.

Most of the medieval castles in Sweden are situated on heights surrounded by water or otherwise inaccessible places. Such placement, needless to say, was not due to any considerations for natural beauty, but because it afforded the most advantageous defense.

For these strong stone houses has developed direct from the prehistoric fortifications whose foundations are still found here and there.

When Sweden, in the Sixteenth century, ceased to be disturbed by

civil war, the gloomy and inhospitable fortresses were gradually converted into dwelling houses. As time passed these grew more and more comfortable, and esthetic considerations became more decisive. Many of the most beautiful castles in Sweden date from this interesting transition period. From the beginning of the Seventeenth century Sweden was a great power, and remained one till Charles XII's unlucky campaigns impoverished the country and put an end to its domination in the Baltic.

Among the medieval Swedish castles touching the early Renaissance style, Skarhult, Vittskovle, and Torup are the most characteristic and best preserved. They are in Skane, and were rebuilt in the Sixteenth century.

Vittskovle and Torup are laid out on a similar plan, with four wings round a courtyard, towers at diagonally opposite corners, stepped gables and firing passages; and both were surrounded for defense purposes by moats, over which drawbridges were lowered in olden times.

At Torup these moats have been filled since the Eighteenth century along two of the facades, and replaced by gardens laid out in the old style, with sculptures, rose pergolas, and box hedges. But the charmingly weathered brick walls are still reflected in quiet waters, among water lilies and proud swans.

The courtyard at Torup, with its Gothic cloister and pointed arches, is one of the most remarkable in the country from the standpoint of art and history. A stone tablet is set into the wall over its gateway. Its Latin inscription is dated 1632 and was composed by the owner of the property at that time, Sigvard Grubbe, a scholar and a friend of the king. He calls upon his successors, "whoever they may be," to do all in their power, as he did, to preserve and beautify the ancient building they have inherited.

Foundations and a few massive stone houses still survive from this long-vanished time, and in certain cases the same family has lived on the same property for three or four centuries. There are estates, which, for 500, or even 600 years, have been handed down from one generation to another without ever being sold, though these, of course, are rare exceptions.

Many lie far from the towns, so that none of the modern thirst for superficial, exciting pleasures has yet found its way to them; that is why the old Swedish traditions in all classes of society are more firmly rooted there than anywhere else.

**True Ghost Stories****By Famous People**

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**By JANE COWL**  
Actress.

"**H**EAVEN knows we mortals can't guess the elaborate workings of the subconscious mind, nor of mental telepathy nor of psychic forces!" exclaimed Jane Cowl, the brilliant actress. "Every now and then we see an obvious example of their powers, but most of the time we are in complete darkness about their intricacies.

"When I was a child, I was early impressed with an example of psychic warning," continued Miss Cowl, as she scanned the rows of books of mystery in the book store which she was visiting.

"One day, while my Grandmother Julia, my mother's mother, was ill, I visited her. She lay in her great carved walnut bed, an invalid, helpless, bedridden. For years she had not been able to move from

that bed. Above her was a huge painting in a weighty carved frame, all parts of the massive, ugly decorative scheme of the day.

"Suddenly Grandmother Julia astonished us by jumping from her bed and running to the middle of the room.

"We asked what was the trouble, the cause for her unexpected act. My sister called to me, my sister called me!" she exclaimed.

"Just then the weighty picture fell from the wall upon her bed, and its glass shattered into hundreds of pieces.

"If grandmother had been in her bed the heavy thing would have doubtless killed her.

"It would seem that the spirit of her sister, who was in another city at the time, warned her of her danger, and sustained her with unexpected strength to jump from her bed. Perhaps not, but it is plausible the spirits of our friends and relatives can visit us in other forms than physical," concluded Miss Cowl, as she discovered a book on criminology which she wanted to read, and to which she turned her keen attention.

**BEDTIME STORY****By THORNTON W. BURGESS****DANNY OVERHEARS SOME TALK**

**L**ITTLE by little the shakes left Danny Meadow Mouse. Not that Danny was no longer afraid. No, indeed! He was very much afraid. He still couldn't see anything for him but to starve or else furnish Billy Mink with a dinner, and of course he didn't want to do either of these things. Certainly not. But having had time to think a little he realized that for the time being he was quite safe. Billy Mink couldn't get at him because that knothole through which he had squeezed into that hollow log was too small for Billy to get even his head in. Had it been Shadow the Weasel instead of Billy Mink—well, it isn't pleasant to think what might

Danny listened. He listened with all his might.

"I've been all over the Green Meadows and didn't see a sign of Danny Meadow Mouse," said Hooty. Danny would have laughed at that had it not been for the memory of Billy Mink hiding somewhere just outside.

"What are you watching for here?" continued Hooty. "No one lives around here."

"Sh!" warned Mrs. Hooty. "It may be true that no one lives around here but unless my eyes are crossed and my ears are no longer to be trusted, I both caught a glimpse of and heard some one over near that old log just as I arrived a few minutes ago. When eyes and ears tell me the same thing I take notice. Some one is hiding right down there and I'm going to stay right here, until I find out who it is."

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"What Are You Watching for Here?"  
Continued Hooty.

have happened in that case. You know, Shadow is much smaller than Billy Mink.

So after awhile Danny stopped shaking. He began to wonder just where Billy Mink was. Billy hadn't made a sound for some time. He could shut his eyes and picture Billy hiding just within good jumping distance of that knothole. That ought to have been enough. But it wasn't. He wanted to know where Billy was. He stole a little nearer the knothole so as to peek out. He was very quiet about it. Yes, indeed, he was very quiet about it. He didn't make the tiniest sound.

Just as he got near enough to see out in the moonlight a little he heard a voice. It set that poor little heart of his to going pit-a-pat. It was the voice of Hooty the Owl, and you know there is no one of whom Danny has greater fear than Hooty the Owl. From the sound Danny knew that Hooty was in the top of a tree very close by.

"Now, how did he know that I am here?" thought Danny. "Seems as if everybody I fear knows I am somewhere around and is looking for me."

Of course this wasn't so, but it is no wonder Danny felt so after all he had been through. Hooty was talking in a low tone. He was talking to Mrs. Hooty. It didn't take Danny long to find that out.

**Saying About "Fooling People"**

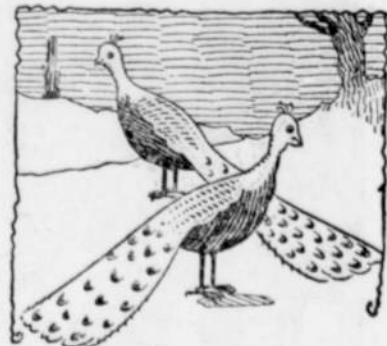
The oft-quoted saying "You can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time" is sometimes attributed to P. T. Barnum, the famous show man and circus owner, but more often to Abraham Lincoln who, it is said, used it in a speech delivered at Clinton, Ill., September 8, 1858. But there is no copy of the alleged speech in existence. The fact is, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer, no positive evidence has been advanced to establish the authorship of the quotation, which has long been a fertile subject of controversy.

**Hosts Had Tray of Coins for Departing Visitors**

Because of the difficulty of travel in South and Central America, before the coming of the railroads and the opening of highways, on the country estates the owners always looked after the passing traveler, as hotels were unheard of; and this had its defects as well as its advantages, for the traveler was dependent upon the good will of his host as well as on the size of his establishment. Most of the reports which have come to us show, however, no lack of good will.

It is said that more than one wealthy man used to keep his gold stored in the attic, uncounted, but ready to loan to friends without interest or security. There are descriptions, also of early travelers in California being sent off on the best horses belonging to the hacienda where they had stopped for the night; and apparently it was the fashion for the hacienadada to leave a tray of silver coins, covered with a cloth, on a table in his guest room, from which one might draw, but was not expected to take more than enough for immediate need.

Even before the United States took over the government in California, in 1848, this practice had nearly disappeared, because of unscrupulous travelers and promoters from the states who had not hesitated to misuse Spanish hospitality. Such has been the sad fate of many fine old customs.—Washington Post

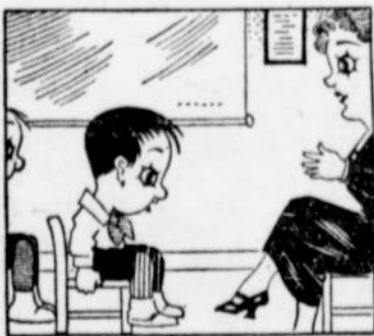
**BARNYARD WORRIES**

"What worries you?"

"I was just thinking about this evolution business, and hoping our race doesn't degenerate and lose these tails."

**Edison an Optimist**

While the fire that destroyed his manufacturing plant at Orange, N. J., in 1914 was at its height, Thomas Edison turned to his general manager and said: "Well, Wilson, she's a gonner, but we'll build her bigger and better than ever."

**GAME'S OVER**

Teacher—After Samson and killed the lion with his bare hands, had slain the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, and carried off the gates of Gaza, he was overcome by Delilah. Can you tell me how she did it?

Wise Kid—Yes'm She put out his pipe.